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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY AUGUST 20, 2004

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 20, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

SABAH, MILLIYET: Working on a tip, police from Izmir Security Directorate arrested two alleged PKK/Kongra-Gel suspects with one kilo of C-4 bombs in a house in Ciftlikkoy. The suspects told police during questioning that they had been planning to attack the touristic Cesme town of Izmir.

ULKEDE GUNDEM: Villagers found two unidentified dead bodies in Findik district of Guclukonak, Sirnak province, yesterday.

Jandarma took the dead bodies to Guclukonak to identify them.

ZAMAN, ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: 600 people evicted from their houses in Ilıcak (Germav) village of Beytussebab, Sirnak province, have been living in tents under very tough conditions for about a month now. The villagers told the visiting Diyarbakir HRA Committee that in one case 21 persons were living in one tent. Soldiers from the Beytussebab Jandarma Command reportedly told villagers that they should move, for security reasons, to the right bank of the Ilıcak Creek that runs through the village, but the villagers unanimously told the HRA Committee that the GOT forces evicted them from their houses for having assisted and harbored the PKK. They said that PKK militants had not visited their village for over a year, but that villagers had provided food to the militants in the past out of fear. Some women in the tents complained that their children were suffering from skin diseases. The Beytussebab Sub-governor Cihan Demirhan told the HRA Committee that the villagers had not been forcibly evicted, and that they could return to their houses if they wanted.

MILLIYET, HURRIYET: Hasan Tabak, 23, who had managed to escape from the highly-secure Kurkculer F-type prison in Adana on May 7, 2004, was rearrested in Adana. Tabak is being charged with attempted murder, and with being a member of a criminal organization. Tabak was also involved in a fight after he had escaped from the prison.

VAKIT: Based on a tip, the Jandarma team from Hilvan, Sanliurfa province, seized 3.4 kilos of hashish and 2,279 roots of hemp in a field in Bahcecik village that belonged to Resat Y., who was later imprisoned.

MILLIYET, HURRIYET: President Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice stated that the United States was doing what it could, with non-military methods, to weaken the PKK and make it less active. During a speech Rice delivered at a Washington think-tank in Washington, in response to a question about combating the PKK, she said "In order to confront the threat imposed on Turkey by this irregular force, which we have declared as a terrorist organization, we are discussing with Turkish authorities about what can be done on both sides of the border."

EVRENSEL: In Adana, some NGOs and political parties condemned the U.S. attacks in Najaf, Iraq. The demonstrators, who gathered in the Inonu Park, carried placards stating "Do Not Go to Iraq, Do Not Shed Brothers Blood," and shouted anti-American slogans. The Adana HRA Secretary, Ethem Acikalin, claimed that the United States is attempting to activate its Broader Middle East Project by invading Najaf.

MILLIYET, ULKEDE OZGUR GUNDEM: With initiative from the government, the Radio and Television High Commission (RTUK) prepared a new regulation opening the path for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish on TRT and other national TV channels. Given the demand from the Southeast for broadcasting in Kurdish, and taking into account the sensitivity in the Southeast into account, RTUK requested opinions from some government agencies, including Interior Ministry and National Intelligence Organization (MIT), about whether or not broadcasting in Kurdish in Diyarbakir is permissible. The Diyarbakir Governorate, in response to an Interior Ministry inquiry said that the most widely spoken Kurdish dialect in Diyarbakir was the Kirmanci dialect. RTUK informed the Diyarbakir Soz and Gun TV stations and the Cagri-TV in Batman, which had applied for permission for broadcasting in Kurdish some time ago, to submit their applications. Military circles are not sympathetic to broadcasting in Kurdish before a detailed study has been made in the region.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

YENI SAFAK: In Viransehir, Sanliurfa province, the Chamber of Agriculture Vice President Hammut Babac said that the yield in cotton was going to be lower than last year's production due to the problems they experienced in electricity and irrigation. He said that they produced 140,000 tons of cotton from 280,000 acres in 2003 and that they were expecting the yield from the same area to be between 80-90,000 tons in 2004.

